

July 2007

RE: Direct Loan Tools for Windows, Release 7.0

Dear DL Tools Users:

Federal Student Aid is pleased to announce the availability of Direct Loan (DL) Tools for Windows, Release 7.0. DL Tools is a multi-year Windows-based application designed to provide the following functionality related to all Direct Loan schools' software:

- Compare the School Account Statement (SAS) to loans and actual disbursements recorded in EDEExpress or an external file, and/or compare the SAS to the DL Tools Cash database.
- Print the SAS in a readable format.
- Track Cash Receipts (drawdowns) and Refunds of Cash for Direct Loan.
- Rebuild your Direct Loan origination and disbursement records in EDEExpress using an automated process.

DL Tools was developed to process data for multiple program years. Release 7.0 contains SAS Compare and formatting, Cash Management, and Rebuild functionality for the 2005-2006, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008 cycles.

All Direct Loan schools can use the Compare and Cash Management functionality. The Rebuild function is used by schools to rebuild accepted Direct Loan records in EDEExpress for Windows databases. However, non-EDEExpress users can export data from a rebuilt EDEExpress database to recreate non-EDEExpress loans or databases. For information on creating file formats and exporting data from EDEExpress to an external system, see Volume III of the *2007-2008 COD Technical Reference*.

One way to meet the Quality Assurance requirement in the Direct Loan program is to run the Disbursement Measurement Tool Report (available in DL Tools if connected to EDEExpress), as well as certain Direct Loan lists (available in EDEExpress). Tolerances can be applied when running these reports. Tolerances are guidelines you set for evaluating the effectiveness of your school's Direct Loan processes and procedures.

The Disbursement Measurement Tool Report and certain Direct Loan lists with tolerances assist schools with monitoring current operations, procedures, and program status. Your school decides which reports to use, when to run them, and what action to take as a result. You can use them to review progress as part of a continuous improvement plan.

If you do not use EDEExpress, you can still use DL Tools to assist in reconciling Direct Loans. You can import cash, loan, or disbursement data from your external Direct Loan system into DL Tools and compare your data to the SAS.

Important DL Tools Comparison Reports Note: DL Tools Loan and Disbursement Comparison Reports are designed to be run using the SAS with YTD detail, *not* monthly detail. See Direct Loan Bulletin (DLB) 02-36 for information about default settings and SAS option selections. You can change your SAS options (YTD detail, for example) by contacting your COD School Relations customer service representative at **800/848-0978; TDD/TTY 800/461-7010** or by e-mail at CODSupport@acs-inc.com or by accessing the COD Web site at cod.ed.gov.

About this Cover Letter

This letter includes the following information:

- An overview on installing DL Tools for Windows, Release 7.0
- An overview of product enhancements for 508 Compliance
- Information on Windows Vista
- A list of enhancements available in DL Tools Release 7.0
- Results gathered from DL Tools benchmark testing
- Reminders on backing up your DL Tools database

How to Get the DL Tools Software and Documentation

You can download DL Tools Release 7.0 and related user documentation from the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Download (FSAdownload) Web site, located at fsadownload.ed.gov.

Instructions for downloading DL Tools are located in the "Downloading Documentation and Software from the FSAdownload Web Site" section of the *DL Tools for Windows Release 7.0 Installation Guide*.

If you have trouble accessing the FSAdownload Web site, contact CPS/SAIG Technical Support at **800/330-5947 (TDD/TTY 800/511-5806)** or by e-mail at CPSSAIG@ed.gov.

Note: Some organizations restrict their users from downloading programs from Internet sites. If you have trouble downloading, contact your technical support staff to ensure that you have full download rights.

If You Have Technical Support Questions

Contact CPS/SAIG Technical Support if you have questions about DL Tools, such as installation issues, software problem resolution, software functionality, or you require technical assistance.

You can reach CPS/SAIG Technical Support Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. (CT), at **800/330-5947 (TDD/TTY 800/511-5806)**. You can also send e-mail inquiries, comments, or suggestions to CPSSAIG@ed.gov. A representative will respond within one business day.

You can also post questions regarding DL Tools on FSATECH. FSATECH is an e-mail listserv for technical questions about Federal Student Aid systems, software, and mainframe products. For more information about FSATECH, including how to subscribe, go to fsa4schools.ed.gov, click “Listserve/Mailing Lists” on the left menu, and click the “FSATech listserv” link.

Table of Contents

DL Tools for Windows, Release 7.0.....	1
2007-2008 COD Technical Reference, Volume IV (DL Tools).....	1
Section 508 Compliance	1
Windows Vista.....	2
Product Enhancements.....	2
General Changes.....	2
Disbursement Detail External Add (DLEXDISB)	3
DL Tools Benchmarking.....	3
Imports.....	3
Reports.....	4
Reminders	4
Back Up Your Database Weekly.....	4

DL Tools for Windows, Release 7.0

DL Tools for Windows Release 7.0 can be installed as an upgrade to DL Tools Release 6.0, which enables you to carry 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 DL Tools data forward from your Release 6.0 database.

To upgrade your DL Tools database from Release 6.0 to Release 7.0, run the Stand Alone Custom installation option (for standalone PCs) or the Workstation installation option (for PC workstations accessing a database stored on a network drive).

If you are installing the DL Tools software for the first time, you must choose the Stand Alone Full installation option (for standalone PCs) or the Network Server and Workstation installation options (for PC workstations accessing a database stored on a network drive).

Important Back-up Note: You cannot access 2004-2005 data in your DL Tools database after you upgrade from Release 6.0 to Release 7.0. We strongly recommend you create a back-up copy of your Release 6.0 database (DLT.mdb) before upgrading to Release 7.0, in the event that you need to access your 2004-2005 data using an earlier version of DL Tools on another PC.

For more information on installing DL Tools Release 7.0, see the *DL Tools for Windows Release 7.0 Installation Guide*, available for download from fsadownload.ed.gov.

2007-2008 COD Technical Reference, Volume IV (DL Tools)

For record layouts, report mock-ups, and other additional details on using DL Tools Release 7.0, see the *2007-2008 COD Technical Reference, Volume IV (DL Tools)*, available for download in late July, 2007 from fsadownload.ed.gov.

Section 508 Compliance

To comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, the DL Tools for Windows, Release 7.0 is compatible with screen reader technology used by the visually impaired. Screen reader software cannot interpret color shading in DL Tools software entry fields or directly read the contents of software grid cells. To accommodate these restrictions, DL Tools for Windows, Release 7.0 includes the following features:

- All DL Tools fields that are shaded yellow to indicate they are required also display a “-R” after the software label. The “-R” indicates the field is required.

- All DL Tools grids display “floating” text descriptions of the contents of grid cells when cells are selected. The text displays one cell above (or below, if the first cell is selected) the selected cell. The text lists Row number, Column title, and (if applicable) the current Value. Clicking once in a cell, or using the Tab key or arrow keys to move to a cell, displays the text. Clicking a second time, or using the Tab key or arrow keys to move from a cell, hides the text.
- Floating text is always enabled for the SYSADMIN user ID and always displays in the Startup Information dialog box. To disable the floating text, go to **Tools, Setup, Security Users** and create a new user ID and password. Exit DL Tools, and then log back in with your new user ID and password. For all user IDs other than SYSADMIN, floating text is disabled by default. To enable floating text, select the **Enable 508 Grid Functionality?** checkbox in the Security Users dialog box.

Note: Users will always see the “-R” label added to software fields.

Windows Vista

At this time, Federal Student Aid has not certified the Microsoft Corporation’s recently released Windows Vista as a supported operating system for DL Tools or its other PC software products. This guidance also applies to the Local Area Network (LAN) or “server” version of Windows, known as Windows Server 2008, which is due for release in 2008. We will provide additional information as it becomes available.

Product Enhancements

The following product enhancements are available in DL Tools Release 7.0:

General Changes

- **Program Year 2004-2005 Removed:** We removed DL Tools functionality applicable to program year 2004-2005.
- **Program Year 2007-2008 Added:** We added DL Tools functionality applicable to program year 2007-2008.
- **2007-2008 Message Classes Added:** Year indicators in message classes were updated for program year 2007-2008.

Disbursement Detail External Add (DLEXDISB)

- **Valid Transaction Date Range Updated:** Release 7.0 allows only the transaction date range 6/22/2006 to 10/27/2009 when a 2007-2008 Disbursement Detail External Add file (DLEXDISB) is imported. The transaction date range for the 2006-2007 Disbursement Detail External Add file (DLEXDISB) is still 6/22/2005 to 10/27/2008, and for the 2005-2006 Disbursement Detail External Add file (DLEXDISB), the date range is still 6/22/2004 to 10/27/2007.

DL Tools Benchmarking

We performed benchmarking tests on the DL Tools for Windows, Release 7.0 software to determine how it operates in certain operating environments. These tests were all completed on a Pentium 1000 MHz with 512 MB RAM.

Imports

The benchmarking results for DL Tools import files are as follows:

- Records were imported into an empty database.
- The Benchmarking Volume is the type and number of records that were imported in the test.
- The Average Time Elapsed column indicates the measurement of time starting when the user clicks OK in the Import dialog box to begin the import process until the import statistics are displayed.

Imports

Component	Operating System	Benchmarking Volume	Time Elapsed
Rebuild	Windows 2000	1000 originations	3 minutes, 57 seconds
	Windows XP	4000 disbursements	3 minutes, 59 seconds
School Account Statement (SAS)	Windows 2000	2 Cash Summary 8 Disbursement Summary 100 Cash Detail	3 seconds
	Windows XP	200 Loan Detail (loan level) 800 Loan Detail (disbursement activity level)	3 seconds

Reports

The benchmarking results for DL Tools Internal Ending Cash Balance Reports and Loan Detail Comparison are as follows:

- The Benchmarking Volume is the number of records and approximate number of pages that were printed in the test.
- The Time Elapsed column indicates the length of time starting when the user clicks OK in the DL Tools Print dialog box through the time the operating system's Print dialog box appears.

Reports

Report	Operating System	Benchmarking Volume	Time Elapsed
2007-2008 Internal Ending Cash Balance Report	Windows 2000	200 Cash 1200 Disbursements 6 pages	2 seconds
	Windows XP		2 seconds
Loan Detail Comparison	Windows 2000	50 loans 6 pages	3 seconds
	Windows XP		3 seconds

Reminders

Back Up Your Database Weekly

You should back up your DL Tools database file (DLT.mdb) regularly so you do not lose your data. We recommend that you back up your files after each major update to your database (for example, entering or importing data into DL Tools), or at least once a week. You should also back-up your 2005-2006, 2006-2007, or 2007-2008 EDEExpress database before using DL Tools' Rebuild feature for a particular program year.

DL Tools does not include a backup utility. You must use your own backup system. Be sure to test your backup software regularly to verify that it can reliably restore your database.